



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

January 6, 1998

H.R. 1567 **Eastern Wilderness Act of 1997**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on November 5, 1997

CBO estimates that enacting this bill would not have a significant impact on the federal budget. Because H.R. 1567 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. H.R. 1567 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 1567 would direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to study and inventory all federal lands of 500 acres or greater east of the 100th meridian that qualify as wilderness as defined by the bill. Within 10 years of the bill's enactment, the two Secretaries would be required to recommend to the President land suitable for wilderness designation as a result of such study.

The federal government owns roughly 43 million acres east of the 100th meridian, of which about 4 million acres is already designated wilderness. The Department of the Interior has jurisdiction over almost 12 million acres of federally owned land, the Forest Service (within the Department of Agriculture) has jurisdiction over about 25 million acres, and other agencies have jurisdiction over another 6 million acres.

Assuming that the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior would study only that federal land under their jurisdiction that is not already designated as wilderness, we estimate that enacting H.R. 1567 would require that about 33 million acres be reviewed for suitability for wilderness designation over the next 10 years. Under current law, many of the acres under Agriculture and Interior jurisdiction would be studied and inventoried for wilderness designation as part of the regular cycle of land management reviews. Therefore, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1567 would require additional costs of less than \$500,000 per year over the next 10 years, subject to appropriation of the necessary funds. CBO assumes for this estimate that the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior would not study the 6 million acres of federal land in the East outside their jurisdiction.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Victoria V. Heid. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.